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ABSTRACT

In an effort to determine preliminary results of an intensive public affairs leadership program designed to improve the skills of selected potential rural leaders in analyzing and taking action upon public problems, two control and one comparison group were pre- and post-tested. Group I (N=91 with a 65% response) consisted of all persons who participated in the one-year training program focused on the analysis of local and statewide public issues; Group II (N=34 with a 94% response) consisted of the first group of people who were involved in the three-year program focused on local, state, national, and international public issues; Group III (N=73 with an 81% response) constituted the comparison group made up of people with characteristics similar to those of the program participants. Participant change was measured in terms of attendance, membership committee participation, offices held, and nonlocal affiliations in groups categorized as: government and quasi-government; voluntary public service (nongovernment); political; fraternal; social, athletic, and sports; religious; military and patriotic; and economic interest. Results indicated a trend away from participation in nongovernment-affiliated public service groups and greater involvement in organizations having legislated authority. Supplementary analysis of participant self-assessments of program effects indicated that the greatest effects were perceived in areas directly related to program objectives (i.e., increases in public affairs interest, feelings of confidence, and analytical skills). (JC)

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CHANGING PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION: A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

A preliminary evaluation of an intensive public affairs leadership program using a pretest-posttest comparison group design shows that participants had statistically significant gain scores from pretest to posttest over persons in a nonequivalent control group. There was a trend away from participation in nongovernment-affiliated voluntary public service organizations such as men's and women's service clubs, and greater involvement in organizations which have legislated authority to act on behalf of the community. The evaluation is preliminary in that control variables such as age, sex, and socioeconomic status were not involved in the statistical analysis. Supplementary analysis of participant self-assessments of program effects indicates that the greatest effects were perceived in areas directly related to program objectives, i.e., increased interest in public affairs, increased feelings of confidence and assertiveness in dealing with public issues, and increased skill in analyzing public problems.

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Introduction

In 1970, the Pennsylvania Cooperative Extension Service began a five-year experimental public affairs leadership development program with financial assistance from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The program was intended to improve the skills of selected potential rural leaders in analyzing and taking action on public problems. The 264 program participants were young men and women between 20 and 40 years of age. About two-thirds of the participants were engaged in a one-year program which focused on the analysis of local and state-wide public issues, and the remainder were selected to continue in the program for an additional two years while studying national and international issues. Each year participants received about 20 days of workshop instruction and field trip experiences. The program is now being evaluated through analysis of data collected at several points in time.

One premise of the Public Affairs Leadership Program was that group action is frequently required in dealing with complex public problems. Changes in participation in groups which deal with public issues should thus be one indicator of program effects. This report presents preliminary data on these changes and the results of an analysis of differential effects of the two principal types of training structures used in the program. A supplementary analysis will examine the patterns of participant responses to a list of statements designed to determine the extent to which participants feel the Public Affairs Leadership Program had an impact on leadership and family roles.

Stratification theory and exchange theory have often been used in studies of participation (Edwards and Booth, 1973). Stratification theory postulates a positive relationship between participation in community organizations and socioeconomic status. Exchange theory (Homans, 1961) assumes that organizational affiliation involves an exchange between the individual and the organization. As personal resources such as leadership and analytic skills increase, the demand for these skills in public affairs organizations and special interest groups should increase. The skills and resources which the individual has to "exchange" might reflect socioeconomic status. One purpose of the Public Affairs Leadership Program was to increase these skills and resources irrespective of socioeconomic status. The analysis of program effects on participation, reported here, is to be followed by an analysis of effects of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the participants. Exchange concepts were used to interpret findings of the preliminary analysis.

Some Relevant Literature

Research on the effectiveness of rural affairs leadership development programs is extremely limited. In a study of the effectiveness of the Michigan Kellogg Farmers Study Program, Robert (1969) found that there was no significant difference in gain by participants from pre-test to post-test on the variables of critical thinking ability, open-mindedness, reading comprehension, and the ability to identify realistic farm policy alternatives. The study was limited in that it did not include change measures related to political affairs and participation in voluntary organizations. Using participant statements on the impact of an intensive leadership development program upon their lives, Giebink's (1972) evaluation of the Montana Kellogg Extension Education Project concluded that participants showed an increase in self-confidence, self-image, open-mindedness, knowledge of public affairs, and involvement in community affairs. The contradictory findings of the two studies apparently relate to differences in measurement techniques and the variables considered. Dawson (1975) used a pre-test-post-test to study changes associated with participation in a leadership development program conducted in rural

Alabama, and found that attitudes about community affairs changed in a statistically significant positive direction. Most other studies report participant statements of program effects after completion of a leadership development program (Franklin, 1959). We have not found any studies which systematica-ly assess increases in organizational participation following a leadership development program.

Theoretical and empirical studies of the factors related to participation in public affairs activities have included the following variables: socioeconomic status, sex, organizational involvement, age, and alienation (Erbe, 1964: 198-215; Verba and Nie, 1972; Edwards and Booth, 1973; and Bell, et al., 1961). In a nationwide study of participation in voluntary associations, Hyman and Wright (1971: 191-206), conclude that participation in voluntary associations "is not characteristic of the majority of Americans." Hawley and Zimmer (1970), in a study of several methropolitan communities, examined citizen membership in different types of organizations; only 13 percent were members of community and divic groups. In a study of political participation in a small community, Agger and Ostrom (1956: 139-148) found that only eight percent of their respondents were politically active. Given the need for increasing the number of effective participants in public affairs activities, it seems imperative to determine objectively whether a leadership development program will increase public affairs participation among citizens.

Data, Methods, and Variables

Data were collected twice from all participants in the state-wide workshop. Base data, on participation in nonprofit organizations and public affairs activities and information on attitudes about leadership and public affairs, were collected prior to taking the course. Participants were asked to respond to the same questions two years after they had completed the program. Similar data were collected from a comparison group of persons in 1973 and again in 1975.

A "nonequivalent control group" design (Campbell and Stanley, 1963: 47-50) was used, with two "treatment" or program groups and a comparison group (Weiss, 1972: 69). Group 1 (N=91) consisted of all persons who participated in the one-year training program focused on the analysis of local and statewide public issues. Group 2 (N=34) consisted of the first group of persons who were involved in the three-year program focused on local, state, national, and international public issues. Group 3 or the comparison group consisted of 73 persons with characteristics similar to those of the program participants, as identified by references given by program participants as people who knew the participants well. The response rates for persons completing both the pre-test and the post-test were: Group 1 - 65 percent, Group 2 - 94 percent, and Group 3 - 81 percent.

It was assumed that improving participant skills in problem solving and in leading groups should contribute to increasing the level of participant involvement in public affairs activities. Increased involvement in such activities should contribute to a decrease in participation in expressive groups for purely social interaction, status preservation, and self-actualization such as in the arts and recreation. Skills imparted should also increase participation in economic interest groups.

Several dimensions of participation were included in the analysis of changing patterns of participation. Public affairs activities were seen as

government and quasi-government public service groups, voluntary public service groups (nongovernmental), and political groups. The government and quasi-government public service organization category included all official government bodies such as the county commissioners, and agencies under their control, as well as advisory groups to these agencies; school boards; and authorities. Voluntary public service organizations included historical and cultural societies, men's and women's service clubs, and citizen interest groups. Political organizations included political parties, campaigns, or organizations, and general political interest groups. Expressive organizations included: fraternal, social, athletic, sports, and religious groups. Other organizations included economic interest groups and military and patriotic organizations. Participation in any of these organizations was measured by a yes-no response on the following variables: regular or frequent attendance at meetings, organizational membership, committee participation, holding an office, and involvement in the organization at regional or higher levels. A "yes" response was coded with a 1, and a "no" response was coded with a 0. These responses were taken directly from the questionnaire, while the local, state, or national level of operation was assessed by a coder.

Differences in mean scores between pre-test and post-test for each variable were calculated. Analysis of variance on all pre-test variables was used to assess the equivalence of groups. Analysis of covariance was used to test for program effects. For the preliminary analysis, the .10 level of probability was used as a minimum level for accepting a relationship as being statistically significant.*

The groups differed significantly on only one pre-test measure of public affairs participation: holding office in voluntary public service organizations. The mean scores on this variable were: Group 1 ($\bar{X}$ = .319), Group 2 ($\bar{X}$ = .471), and Group 3 ($\bar{X}$ = .597). On the average, members of the comparison group held more offices in voluntary public service organizations than did the program participants. The groups also differed significantly on two measures of involvement in expressive organizations: Group 2 members held more offices in fraternal organizations ($\bar{X}$ = .147) than either Group 1 members ($\bar{X}$ = .066) or Group 3 members ($\bar{X}$ = .014). Group 3 members participated on more committees in social, sports, and athletic organizations ($\bar{X}$ = .181) than did the members of Group 1 ($\bar{X}$ = .055) or Group 3 ($\bar{X}$ = .088). Thus, statistically significant differences were found in only one of the 15 measures of involvement in public affairs activities and in only two of the 20 measures of involvement in expressive activities.

The groups did not differ in pre-test scores of persons who did and those who did not complete the post-test. Table 1 shows that the statistically significant differences were distributed over all three groups. We concluded that while differences between groups on pre-test and post-test measures should be interpreted conservatively, they could be attributed to program effects rather than to characteristics of the individuals studied.

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* Significance tests are not required for such data, but are presented as a guide to evaluating the magnitude of relationships.

Table 1. Statistically significant differences for pre-test scores on change measures between persons who completed the post-test and those who did not.

Item, by group	MEAN SCORE: Persons Completing Post-test	Persons not Completing Post-test
Group 1 (One-year Program)		
N completing = 91		
N not completing = 49		
Government or Quasi-government Organizations		
Regular or Frequent Attendance	1.022	0.622
Hold Office	0.506	0.204
Group 2 (Three-year Program)		
N completing = 34		
N not completing = 2		
Government or Quasi-government Organizations		
Regular or Frequent Attendance	0.571	0.0
Committee Participation	0.400	0.0
Hold Office	0.286	0.0
Group 3 (Comparison Group)		
N completing = 73		
N not completing = 17		
Government or Quasi-government Organizations		
Committee Participation	0.534	0.118
Nonlocal Affiliation	0.054	0.0
Political Organizations		
Membership	0.232	0.0
Economic Associations		
Committee Participation	0.740	0.235

Findings

Program effects should be shown by greater increases in scores from pre-test to post-test in program groups than in the comparison group.

The specific research hypotheses were:

H_1: Persons in the program will show greater increases in their involvement in public affairs activities than persons in the comparison group.

H_2: Increased involvement will be directly related to the intensity of the training program, with persons in the three-year program becoming more involved than those in the one-year program or the comparison group.

H_3: Persons in the three-year program will show greater increases in involvement at regional and higher levels of public affairs organizations than persons in the one-year program or the comparison group.

H_4: Persons in the program will show greater increases in involvement in economic interest groups than persons in the comparison group.

H_5: Persons in the program will show a decreased level of involvement in expressive organizations relative to persons in the comparison group.

An examination of the relationships reported in Table 2 reveals that research hypotheses 1 and 2 were generally supported. Of the 24 relationships tested, 15 showed greater increases in scores from pre-test to post-test among program participants as against the comparison group, with seven of these relationships being statistically significant. The greatest increases were in the measures of involvement in government and quasi-government organizations. Three out of four of the Group 2 increases in participation in political organizations were statistically significant, while the three increases in scores on this index for Group 1 were negligible. We did not expect to find decreases in scores on participation in voluntary public service organizations on the part of the program groups relative to the comparison group. This perhaps reflects a shift on the part of many participants from involvement in voluntary public service associations to public affairs organizations with legislated authority to act on behalf of the community. As one participant stated, "I want to spend my limited amount of time working through organizations having the greatest potential effect upon community life."

On the measures of involvement in government and quasi-government organizations, the scores for Group 2 members were higher than those for Group 1 members; however, none was statistically significant. Group 2 members showed marked declines in their participation in voluntary public service organizations relative to Group 1, with three out of four of these relationships being statistically significant. These declines appear to be in line with the gains in participation in government and quasi-government organizations and political organizations.

Table 2. Average change in participation in number of organizations between pre-test and post-test, comparing program and comparison groups.
NOTE: Group 1 (G1) N=91, Group 2 (G2) N=34, and Group 3 (G3) N=72.

Type of Organization	Regular or Frequent Attendance			Membership			Committee Participation			Hold Office			Nonlocal Affiliations		
	G1*	G2*	G3*	G1	G2	G3	G1	G2	G3	G1	G2	G3	G1	G2	G3
	Average gain or loss between pre-test and post-test														
Government and Quasi-government	.01	.50[b]	-.04	.17	.50[b]	0	.13	.29	-.04	.03	.18	.07	.10[b]	.12[c]	-.04
Voluntary Public Service (Nongovernment)	.01	-.61[b+**]	.02	-.02	-.45[b]	.04	-.02	-.44[b]	-.05	.15	-.15	-.15	0	0	-.04
Political	-.02	.27[c]	-.09	.02[b]	.18[b]	-.10	.07[a]	.14[b]	-.06	.04	.09	-.07	.02	.14[c]	.01
Fraternal	-.04	-.03	.05	.01	-.03	.03	.01	0	.02	-.01	-.08	.01	--	--	--
Social, Athletic, and Sports	-.08	.07	-.10	-.08	.06	-.02	-.02	0	-.06	0	.05	-.03	-.02[b]	.11[b]	0
Religious	-.09	.06	.03	-.15	.06	-.05	.06	.12	.11	.06	.03	.15	--	--	--
Military and Patriotic	-.02	-.02	.01	.01	-.02	-.05	-.02	0	-.01	.04	0	-.01	--	--	--
Economic Interest Groups	-.03	-.09	-.17	.09	0	-.23	.16	.32	.12	-.03	.07	-.06	.13	.14	-.18
Total	-.25	.11	-.30	.08	.36	-.37	.36	.44	.02	.15	.18	-.22	.17[b]	.52[c]	-.23

*G1 = Group 1 or the persons participating in a one (1) year program; G2 = Group 2 or the persons participating in a three (3) year program; G3 = Group 3 or the group of persons who did not participate in the training program.

Level of statistical significance between treatment and control groups:

a $.05<p\leq.10$
b $.01<p\leq.05$
c $p\leq.01$

+ Indicates a statistically significant relationship between the two program groups.

** Indicates a statistically significant relationship between the designated program group and the comparison group.

Hypothesis 3 had the greatest amount of statistical support relative to the others investigated, with three out of four of the relationships statistically significant. The program groups showed gains in their non-local affiliations in government and quasi-government organizations and in political organizations between pre-test and post-test, while the comparison group showed decreases or remained relatively stable. Neither program group showed gains between pre-test and post-test in their involvement in voluntary public service organizations at regional or higher levels. Since most voluntary public service organizations provide opportunities for their members to serve at the local level, this finding is not surprising.

Evidence in support of Hypothesis 4, involvement in economic interest groups, is contradictory. Given the program's emphasis upon improving group and problem solving skills, one would expect to find program participants becoming more involved in their economic and professional interest groups such as a farmers association, a cooperative, or an association of planners. None of the relationships tested were statistically significant. Members of Group 2 showed a considerable increase in participation on committees relative to the Group 3 members; however, the difference between Group 1 and Group 3 on this variable was negligible.

Although the relationships are not statistically significant, the program groups showed an increase in affiliations with economic interest groups at nonlocal levels, while Group 3 showed decreases. This pattern may reflect the appointment of program graduates to state boards of farmer cooperatives and other agricultural and professional interest groups.

The data generally supported Hypothesis 5, that an increased level of involvement in public affairs activities would be accompanied by a decrease of involvement in social and fraternal activities. Program graduates appear to become more selective and to set priorities for participation in organizations which have legislated authority.

The negligible increase in regular or frequent attendance at government and quasi-government meetings on the part of Group 1 members is difficult to explain, since membership in these organizations increased. With the exception of attendance for Group 1 members, there was an overall increase in participation. However, only the nonlocal organizational affiliations were statistically significant.

Participant Assessment of Program Impact

Questions in the Program Impact Questionnaire were based upon an evaluation questionnaire sent to participants in a similar program in Montana. Participants were asked to comment on the impact of the leadership development program on: (1) their involvement in community programs or activities; (2) their perceptions of themselves as leaders in their communities; (3) their effectiveness as community leaders; (4) their goals for their communities; and (5) their personal lives. Group 3 was not asked to complete this questionnaire. Eighty percent of Group 1 members responded (113) and 95 percent of Group 2 (101). (Responses are summarized in Table 3).

Table 3 Summary of responses to a 28-item questionnaire designed to obtain candid participant feelsings about the extent to which the Public Affairs Leadership Program had an impact upon leadership and family roles. The items are listed in rank order.

AREAS AFFECTED			LEVEL OF EFFECT					
			Decreased		No Effect	Increased		
			(1) Strong	(2) Moderate	(3)	(4) Moderate	(5) Strong	Median
			-Percent-					
	1. Your interest in public affairs.	C1*	1.8	0.0	10.1	27.5	60.6	4.67
		C2**	0.0	1.0	4.1	17.5	77.3	4.85
	2. Knowledge of resources to use in attacking public problems.	C1	1.8	1.8	1.8	40.4	54.1	4.58
		C2	0.0	1.0	1.0	26.8	71.1	4.80
	3. Your willingness to listen to others and consider alternative points of view.	C1	1.9	0.9	8.3	35.2	53.7	4.57
		C2	1.0	0.0	5.2	24.7	69.1	4.78
	4. Your feeling of confidence in openly promoting causes about which you feel strongly.	C1	0.9	0.9	11.9	37.6	48.6	4.46
		C2	0.0	0.0	3.1	30.9	66.0	4.74
First Quartile	5. Perseverance in working toward the accomplishment of what you feel is right.	C1	1.8	0.9	11.9	33.9	51.4	4.53
		C2	0.0	0.0	5.2	35.4	59.4	4.66
	6.5. An appreciation of the importance of fact gathering, thorough study, and planning in dealing with public issues.	C1	1.8	1.8	10.1	42.2	44.0	4.36
		C2	0.0	2.1	5.2	22.7	70.1	4.79
	6.5. Your feelings of independence, growth, and self-worth as a person.	C1	1.8	1.8	16.5	32.1	47.7	4.43
		C2	0.0	2.1	4.1	29.9	63.9	4.72
	8. Your confidence in your long-range future as a public affairs participant.	C1	1.8	3.7	17.4	33.0	44.0	4.32
		C2	0.0	1.0	7.3	28.1	63.5	4.71
	9. Your awareness of connections among problems and the ability to take a comprehensive view of the needs of a community.	C1	1.8	0.0	11.9	46.8	39.4	4.28
		C2	0.0	1.1	2.1	32.6	64.2	4.72
	10. Your knowledge of your limits and strengths as a participant in public affairs.	C1	2.8	0.0	8.3	49.5	39.4	4.29
		C2	0.0	0.0	3.1	36.5	60.4	4.67
Second Quartile	11. Your feeling that you can motivate and inspire people to work together.	C1	1.9	0.9	7.4	57.4	32.4	4.19
		C2	0.0	0.0	3.1	42.3	54.6	4.59
	12. Recognition of your own biases and prejudices.	C1	3.7	2.8	12.0	48.1	33.3	4.15
		C2	1.0	0.0	3.1	42.3	53.6	4.57
	13. Your feeling about your ability to influence community affairs.	C1	0.9	2.8	17.4	45.0	33.9	4.14
		C2	0.0	2.1	5.2	40.2	52.6	4.55
	14. Your ability to involve others in public affairs.	C1	1.8	0.9	16.5	48.6	32.1	4.13
		C2	0.0	1.0	9.3	37.1	52.6	4.55

Table 3 (continued)

AREAS AFFECTED			LEVEL OF EFFECT					
			Decreased		No Effect	Increased		
			(1) Strong	(2) Moderate	(3)	(4) Moderate	(5) Strong	Median
			-Percent-					
	15. The breadth of your interest in a variety of community problems and issues.	G1	0.9	1.8	13.8	50.5	33.0	4.16
		G2	0.0	2.1	5.2	43.3	49.5	4.49
	16. Your feeling that you should concentrate on selected issues rather than getting involved in many.	G1	1.8	1.8	25.7	33.0	37.6	4.12
		G2	2.1	5.2	10.4	34.4	47.9	4.44
	17.5. The priority you place on participation in economic development activities	G1	0.9	2.8	18.5	48.1	29.6	4.08
		G2	1.1	2.1	8.4	41.1	47.4	4.44
	17.5. Your desire to serve the common good.	G1	1.8	0.0	22.9	42.2	33.0	4.10
		G2	0.0	2.1	8.2	43.3	46.4	4.42
Third Quartile	19. Your feeling that others accept you as a leader and look to you for advice in public affairs.	G1	1.9	0.9	24.1	42.6	30.6	4.04
		G2	1.0	0.0	7.2	43.3	48.5	4.46
	20. The priority you place on participation in environmental improvement programs.	G1	0.9	0.9	25.9	47.2	25.0	3.97
		G2	0.0	2.1	12.6	50.5	34.7	4.20
	21. Your use of group skills in community life.	G1	0.9	0.9	20.2	55.0	22.9	4.01
		G2	0.0	0.0	15.6	56.3	28.1	4.11
	22. The priority you place on participation in social services programs.	G1	1.8	2.8	26.6	45.0	23.9	3.92
		G2	1.0	3.1	15.6	46.9	33.3	4.14
	23. Flexibility of your role in your family.	G1	3.7	5.6	52.8	26.9	11.1	3.27
		G2	1.0	5.2	36.5	40.6	16.7	3.68
	24. Satisfaction with the job held when you began participating in the Public Affairs Leadership Program.	G1	10.5	10.5	38.1	24.8	16.2	3.26
		G2	8.5	11.7	28.7	25.5	25.5	3.54
	25. Your participation in religious activities.	G1	1.8	3.7	57.8	20.2	16.5	3.27
Fourth Quartile		G2	0.0	6.2	46.4	24.7	22.7	3.44
	26. Strain and tension in your family.	G1	4.6	8.3	66.7	11.1	9.3	3.06
		G2	6.2	14.4	46.4	24.7	8.2	3.13
	27. Strain and tension between you and your peers.	G1	8.4	13.1	53.3	18.7	6.5	3.04
		G2	11.6	14.7	42.1	25.3	6.3	3.06
	28. Strain and tension between you and older community leaders.	G1	11.1	14.8	51.9	12.0	10.2	2.96
		G2	11.5	18.8	37.5	19.8	12.5	3.03

*Group 1 (N = 113) Includes the three groups of persons who participated in the one-year program only (27 persons did not respond).

**Group 2 (N = 101) Includes the three groups of persons who participated in the three-year program (5 persons did not respond).

Intended Effects

Items ranked in the first quartile provide strong support, even though based upon subjective participant judgements, for the achievement of key program objectives. Participants developed greater self confidence and perseverance, an increased interest in public affairs, knowledge of resources to use in attacking public problems, a willingness to listen to others and consider alternatives, and a desire to "gather the facts" to solve public problems. Most participants rated the program as having either a moderate or strong effect upon these aspects of their lives.

Personal growth and development ranked in the second quartile. Participants developed greater self confidence and a related feeling that they can have an influence on community affairs. Qualities of an open-minded public affairs leader were ranked quite high.

The feeling that others accept the participant as a leader and look to him or her for advice in public affairs will have to be correlated with age. Older participants may feel this way more than the younger ones.

Participant orientation toward community issues ranked lower than expected. During the workshops, quite a few said they would like to concentrate on selected community issues. On the other hand, we had expected that the program would have a broadening effect. Neither of these variables showed a dominant program effect. We were uncertain about whether the program might have a strong effect upon high priority for environmental improvement and social services programs. Both of these items ranked relatively low, below participation in economic development activities.

The desire to serve the common good and the use of group skills in community life ranked relatively low. Attempts were made during the program to sensitize participants to the problems and needs of others in the community, and serving the common good rather than fulfilling the needs of specific groups was subtly emphasized. This may be one of the most difficult aspects of life to change. Perhaps the use of group skills should receive greater emphasis in future statewide workshops.

Unintended Effects

The findings indicate that the program led to some problems in the lives of certain participants, which need to be specified so that corrective action can be taken. Many of the participants in the three-year program were away from their spouses and families for up to 64 days. Greater involvement in public affairs activities can lead to strain and tension in the family. A popular discussion topic for participants at outings was "Balancing Family and Community Responsibilities." The item pertaining to strain and tension in family life was rated as not being an effect of the program by 67 percent of Group 1 members and 46 percent of Group 2 members. Twenty-six percent of participants in the intensive three-year program said the program decreased family strain and tension, while 31 percent said it increased such tensions.

Strain and tension between the participant and his or her peers and/or older community leaders sometimes developed. Some participants developed more tact and less aggressive ways, while some apparently tried to move too fast or invited the reaction of "So you think you're a leader now that you have taken that public affairs course." This problem must be discussed in future workshops.

Discussion

Preliminary findings of the program evaluation show a clear pattern of overall gain from pre-test to post-test for persons in the three-year group on most measures of public affairs participation (excluding voluntary public service) relative to the comparison group. Patterns of involvement by participants at non-local levels within the two major public affairs organizational categories showed 3 out of 4 of the relationships tested to be statistically significant. Participants were becoming more involved in organizations such as regional planning and development groups.

There was a trend away from participation in nongovernment-affiliated voluntary public service organizations such as men's and women's service clubs, and greater involvement in organizations which have legislated authority to act on behalf of the community. Group 2 members in particular showed increased levels of involvement in political organizations.

Program participants showed considerable increases in committee participation in government and quasi-government organizations, but increases in holding office were negligable. This may indicate that the participants are being tested on committees prior to elevation to officer responsibilities. Members of the comparison and program groups were involved in public affairs activities to a similar extent at the time of the pre-test; on the average, members of the comparison group showed declines in participation.

The supplementary analysis of participant self-assessments of program effects must be interpreted with caution. Persons who have invested much time and effort in a self-improvement activity should be expected, for example, on the basis of cognitive dissonance theory, to regard the activity as useful. The greater the investment, in terms of number of years spent in the program, the greater should be the need to view the activity as worthwhile. The influence of such needs on retrospective assessments is unknown. However, the fact that at least two years had passed since respondents had completed the program would suggest that their assessments reflected, at least in part, actual changes in their points of view and behavior. At least the self-assessment item which indicates a strong increased interest in public affairs is supported by the preliminary analysis of behavioral change on the part of program participants, relative to members of the nonequivalent comparison group.

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